

to a next successive node toward an associated destination node, said method comprising:

for at least one of the nodes, generating and storing an alternate output route out of the node such that, in the event that data packets to be transferred toward a destination node cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link associated with the destination node, the at least one of the nodes can forward the data packets over the alternate output route toward the destination node; and

after generating and storing the alternate output route, if data packets to be transferred toward a destination node cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link associated with the destination node, forwarding the data packets over the alternate output route toward the destination node, by embedding the data packets in virtual packets addressed for the alternate route.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a connectionless route.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route defines an association between the next successive node and an alternate link out of the at least one of the nodes such that data packets intended to be forwarded to the next successive node can be forwarded over the alternate link.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a connection-oriented route.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a bypass path through the at least one node to bypass the next successive node.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a bypass path through the at least one node to bypass a failed link out of the at

least one node.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a connection-oriented route.

9. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a bypass path through the at least one node to bypass the next successive node.

10. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the alternate output route is a bypass path through the at least one node to bypass a failed link out of the at least one node.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein data packets are forwarded over the alternate output route toward the destination node before other nodes on the network receive information that data packets cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein data packets cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link because of a link failure.

13. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein data cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link because of a node failure.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 further comprising, after forwarding the data packets over the alternate output route toward the destination node, providing to other nodes on the network information that data cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the information that

data packets cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node includes a time at which nodes receiving the information should perform a recovery operation such that recovery operations at a plurality of nodes on the network are synchronized.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the information initiates a recovery operation at at least one updating node on the network.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the recovery operation comprises updating a routing table for the at least one updating node.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the recovery operation comprises updating a virtual circuit route that includes the at least one updating node.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein recovery operations at a plurality of updating nodes are synchronized.

20. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein at least one node of the network is capable of operating in both a connectionless environment and a connection-oriented environment.

21. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein at least a portion of the network operates in a connectionless configuration.

22. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein at least a portion of the network operates in a connection-oriented configuration.

23. (Previously canceled)

24. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the network comprises at least a

portion of the Internet.

25. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the network comprises at least a portion of an intranet.

26. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the network comprises at least a portion of an extranet.

27. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for recovering from failures on a network having a plurality of nodes coupled by links over which data packets can be transferred between the nodes, each of a plurality of nodes storing information that associates links out of the node with destination nodes to which data packets can be transferred such that the node can forward data packets out of the node over a link to a next successive node toward an associated destination node, said apparatus comprising:

means for generating and storing, for at least one of the nodes, an alternate output route out of the node such that, in the event that data packets to be transferred toward a destination node cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link associated with the destination node, the at least one of the nodes can forward the data packets over the alternate output route toward the destination node; and

means for forwarding the data packets over the alternate output route toward the destination node after generating and storing the alternate output route, if data packets to be transferred toward a destination node cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link associated with the destination node;

characterized in that data packets to be transferred [is] are embedded in virtual packets addressed for the alternate route, and then sent.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the alternate output route is a

connectionless route.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the alternate output route is a connection-oriented route.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein data packets are forwarded over the alternate output route toward the destination node before other nodes on the network receive information that data cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node.

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein data packets cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link because of a link failure.

32. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein data packets cannot be forwarded to the next successive node over the link because of a node failure.

33. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 further comprising, means for providing to other nodes on the network after data packets are forwarded over the alternate output route toward the destination node, information that data cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node.

34. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the information that data packets cannot be transferred between the at least one of the nodes and the next successive node includes a time at which nodes receiving the information should perform a recovery operation such that recovery operations at a plurality of nodes on the network are synchronized.

35. (Previously canceled)

36. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the network comprises at least a portion of the Internet.

37. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the network comprises at least a portion of an intranet.

38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the network comprises at least a portion of an extranet.